two daily newspapers, two banks, a fine regional museum, and an excellent theater. Former political exiles played an important role in its intellectual life.

By tradition, the local administration was liberal; there was no reactionary gentry in the region, and officials who came to Irkutsk from European Russia found the local soil unfit for Black Hundred ideas. Then there was Governor General Kniazev, with his high standards of dignity, justice, and fairness. The Governor of Irkutsk was a comparatively liberal gentleman who saw no reason to quarrel with Kniazev. The latter, however, had enemies in Irkutsk. The local archbishop denounced him as a Red Judo-Mason, and the gendarmes accused him of associating with the revolutionaries.

The political climate of the city reflected the confusion prevailing all over Russia. Tsarism had triumphed in the war against the people. Order had been restored, but not the Tsar's prestige. Anarchy was spreading downward from the top. Russia's political life was dominated by three forces—the conservative (Octobrist) Duma; the government, for which the Duma was not reactionary enough; and the circle about the Tsar—Rasputin and the Black Hundreds—for which the government was not tough enough.

The new electoral law had abandoned all pretext of letting the "best men elected by all the people" participate in legislation. The electors were redistributed in such a way that the big landowners had an absolute majority in almost all constituencies. Thus, most of the seats in the Duma were turned over to the decaying nobility. Only a dozen seats were kept for workers' representatives in the large cities, and another dozen for peasants, while a few more were left to the luck of the ballot.[1]

The Duma obediently went through the motions of legislation, grinding out the bills submitted by the government. Yet certain parliamentary features had trickled through into political life, and the hand-picked Duma became a public forum in which the numerically weak opposition could air its grievances. It could do this largely because the rightist majority was not indifferent to the voice of the press, and most Russian newspapers had liberal leanings.

The government was not strong enough to impose thought control and muzzle the people, and journalists with courage were able to speak their minds despite the oppressive laws and police regulations. Their

[1] Of the 440 deputies in the Third Duma, 144 belonged to the Black Hundreds and openly called themselves "Monarchists"; 148 were Octobrists; and 26 represented the national minorities of similar political leanings—in all, 318 deputies were reactionaries of various shadings. The rest of the Duma included the Progressives, Cadets, Laborites, and S-D. From 1908 through 1914, there was little change in these figures. The Fourth Duma, elected in 1912, was an exact replica of the Third.